

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 IO-14 SAM-01 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 EB-11 COME-00

INT-08 DRC-01 /168 W

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R 111230Z JUL 74

FM USINT ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0762

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 1497

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MO, SP, SS

SUBJ: SPANISH SAHARA

REF: RABAT 3156

1. THUS FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC ALGERIAN REACTION TO KING HASSAN'S JULY 8 SPEECH ON MOROCCAN CAMPAIGN TO HAVE SAHARAN ISSUE SETTLED IN ITS FAVOR. WE SUSPECT TOP LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN PREOCCUPIED WITH OTHER MATTERS INCLUDEING OAPEC, ISRAELI RAIDS INTO LEBANON AND INTERNAL REDISTRICTING AND PARTY REORGANIZATION, AND HAS NOT YET FOCUSED ON SAHARAN QUESTION.

2. IT WOULD BE MISLEADING, HOWEVER, TO EXPECT ALGERIAN ACQUIESCENCE TO SAHARA BECOMING MOROCCAN. FIRST OF ALL, ALGERIANS CONSIDER THEMSELVES
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PARTY TO PROBLEM AND EXPECT TO CONSULT FULLY ON ITS

SOLUTION. SECOND, WHILE ALGERIA PROBABLY HAS NO SERIOUS CLAIM OF ITS OWN TO SAHARA, DESPITE SOME OF FONMIN BOUTEFLIKA'S PAST STATEMENTS, IT WOULD PREFER ULTIMATELY WEAK, INDEPENDENT SAHARA OR EVEN A SAHARA ATTACHED TO MAURITANIA RATHER THAN ITS BECOMING PART OF A LARGER, STRONGER MOROCCO. MORE IMMEDIATELY, IT WOULD PROBABLY PREFER THAT SAHARAN ISSUE NOT COME TO HEAD NOW, BUT REMAIN IN DORMANT STATUS QUO UNTIL EMERGENCE OF SERIOUS LIBERATION MOVEMENT WHICH IT COULD SUPPORT.

3. WHEN ALGERIANS BECOME FULLY AWARE OF MOROCCAN INTENTIONS, BELIEVE WE CAN EXPECT STRONG REACTION SIMILAR TO THEIR OUTSPOKEN OPPOSITION TO ANNOUNCEMENT OF LIBYAN-TUNISIAN MERGER. FIRST STEPS WILL PROBABLY INCLUDE DEMAND TO KING HASSAN TO CONSULT ON ISSUE. PRESSURE ON SPAIN TO HEAD OFF ANY BILATERAL MOROCCAN-SPANISH SOLUTION, ENLISTMENT OF MAURITANIA AND COUNTER-CAMPAIGN WITH OTHER ARAB GOVERNMENTS TO DEFEAT MOROCCO'S SUMMIT STRATEGY. POSSIBILITY OF STRONGER MEASURES CANNOT BE RULED OUT IF KING PERSISTS ON HIS COURSE.

4. ANOTHER RELEVANT FACTOR IS EVOLUTION WHICH APPEARS TO BE TAKING PLACE IN ALGERIAN THINKING ABOUT GARA DJEBILET IRON DEPOSITS. PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE HAS SPOKEN OF EXPANDING ALGERIA'S STEEL PRODUCTION TO TEN MILLION TONS PER YEAR BY 1980. WHILE NO CONCRETE PLANNING HAS YET TAKEN PLACE, ALGERIAN RAILROAD OFFICIALS HAVE MENTIONED TO US POSSIBILITY OF EXTENDING RAIL LINES TO TINDOUF OR GARA DJEBILET IN ORDER TO SUPPLY EVENTUAL STEEL LL IN ORAN-ARZEW AREA. THIS WOULD MEAN ONE LESS REASON TO COOPERATE WITH MOROCCO IN SAHARAN AREA.SIMPSON

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